



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Law and Order Committee approves report regarding the partial closure of the Department of Corrections Crownpoint District facility**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee accepted an update report from the Navajo Nation Department of Corrections Crownpoint District supervisor David Charles.

“I am disappointed to report that I had to shut down a portion of the jail and only intake is operating, which is the drunk tank,” said Charles.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) expressed frustration regarding the lack of funding to staff the new jail facility, as well as a lack of involvement from public safety division leaders.

“Obviously, there is a lack of interest by supervisors because [LOC] has always asked division directors what assistance they need, and they would always tell us everything is fine,” said Delegate Yazzie.

“We build this beautiful building in Crownpoint and we are already shutting it down,” said Delegate Yazzie. “The lack of preparedness for this new building should have been addressed before it was even built and it frustrates the committee that leadership did not bring this to our attention sooner.”

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat) expressed skepticism regarding the public safety administration, adding that there needs to be an immediate response to the partial shut-down from Navajo Nation Department of Corrections director Delores Greyeyes and Navajo Nation Public Safety Division director John Billison.

The Crownpoint District corrections facility shut down its male holding pod due to the funding shortfall, stated Charles. Inmates with non-alcohol related crimes are being held in the same area, but the majority of them are booked and then released.

“I only have 8 officers currently staffing the jail in Crownpoint and this facility needs 51 officers to be fully operational at an effective level,” said Charles.

To avoid a complete shut down of the facility, LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) suggested seeking funding during the Council Budget Session.

“We can get a budget form to try and get the facility operational again because we know the money is there on an emergency basis,” said Delegate Begaye.

Delegate Shepherd added that DOC would be a priority in the FY2014 Navajo Nation budget.

At the conclusion of the LOC meeting, members voted 3-0 to accept the report.

During Council’s budget session, Delegate Begaye motioned to consider emergency legislation, seeking to obtain a supplemental appropriation for approximately \$16,000 from the Nation’s Personnel Lapse fund.

Delegate Begaye’s motion to add the item to Council’s agenda failed to garner enough supporting votes, or two-thirds of Council’s approval, resulting with a vote of 13-4.

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